



November 8, 2011

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on a pressing matter before the Commission: The proposed AT&T/T-Mobile merger, on the FCC's 11-65 docket, has the potential to bring expanded access to high-speed wireless broadband to people and communities that traditionally do not have this access.

Expanded access to wireless broadband is an important issue in every state, but especially in states with a significant rural population, like North Carolina. Broadband access brings access to new opportunities in business, education, and industry, and it helps rural residents to stay competitive and connected in the 21st century. Broadband is a necessity, not a luxury, and it delivers chances to rural communities that would not otherwise be available.

For instance, modern farmers use broadband to connect with customers, markets, and suppliers. They can also use this technology to access resources and high-tech tools and methods to increase yields. Ultra-fast broadband allows farmers to connect quickly and easily, and wireless capabilities mean that they can accomplish this from their fields.

In my position at the Tobacco Growers' Association of North Carolina, I work closely with farmers from all over the state. My organization supports tobacco growers and works with them to develop strategies, systems, and procedures that will enhance the integrity of the products and reduce marketing costs. Because tobacco is essential to the economy and to the people of North Carolina, we also work to promote the importance of agriculture and to create awareness about the consequences of the loss of farmland. Increased access to enhanced wireless broadband will help us in our work to promote agriculture; additionally, this access will benefit the economy of this state.

But first, broadband has to be available, and in many areas of our state, high-speed wireless Internet service is unavailable or unreliable. This proposed merger, which would result in nearly universal access to broadband via private investment, would have a major impact for rural residents and for farmers in North Carolina. I hope you will support this merger, and I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Graham Boyd
Executive Vice President
Tobacco Growers' Association of North Carolina
CC:

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn